



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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PAUL REVILLE

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

May 28, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

On behalf of the educators of our Commonwealth, I'm pleased to enthusiastically endorse Massachusetts' Phase 2 proposal for the Race to the Top Fund.

As you know, Massachusetts is a national leader with regard to student achievement and reform because we have a history of boldly addressing challenging issues in education. Nearly a generation ago, our state was among the first to institute a rigorous system of standards coupled with high-quality assessments, allowing Massachusetts to vault from the middle ranks of the states in terms of academic achievement to the very top. More recently, we enacted a landmark education reform bill, *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*, that includes groundbreaking provisions to intervene more decisively and effectively in our lowest-performing schools, establish new Innovation Schools that will operate with greater autonomy and flexibility, and lift charter caps in our neediest school districts.

We are proud of our achievements to date, but in Massachusetts, doing well is simply not good enough. Now we are setting a new goal: we want Massachusetts to become the international leader in student achievement, and close – once and for all – the pernicious achievement gaps that are disproportionately affecting our lower-income students, students of color, and students receiving special education services.

Our Race to the Top proposal represents the blueprint for addressing this goal and other education priorities of Governor Deval Patrick, including enhancing the quality of our educator workforce, increasing college and career readiness, and providing targeted support to students, their families, and educators in our lowest-performing schools. The proposal is deeply responsive to your four reform assurances and other priorities, and also highlights unique characteristics of our state: a more unified and coherent public education system from birth

through higher education; increased capacity at multiple levels to sustain successful initiatives over time; and a long history of rich collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

This blueprint is the foundation for the second phase of reform in Massachusetts, and we are already moving forward with several key initiatives. In keeping with our commitment to working with educators to implement reform with – and not to – the field, we have established a task force that includes educators, union representatives, and other partners to develop a robust educator evaluation system by the spring of 2011. As a result of the legislation that was enacted in January, we are establishing new Innovation Schools that will open in September and are implementing strategies that will finally address the educational and social conditions that contribute to chronic underperformance in schools.

We will continue to advance our agenda, and hope that Race to the Top funding will accelerate progress toward our ambitious goals. We deeply appreciate your leadership, and the opportunity to continue our partnership with you and President Obama to do what is right for our students. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul Reville", with a stylized, flowing script.

Paul Reville  
Massachusetts Secretary of Education